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SUBJECT: "VOTING INSTRUCTION FOR THE RESOLUTION"

¶1. The Department instructs USDEL to join consensus on the resolution entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace."

¶2. USDEL is further instructed to deliver the following EOP:

Mr. Chairman,

As in past years, the text before us contains many worthwhile elements. It promotes respect among people with different cultural and religious backgrounds and affirms that mutual understanding and dialogue are crucial for achieving a true and lasting peace.

The United States is committed to building a more peaceful world and encourages individuals from different religious and cultural communities to engage in practical action, such as interfaith service, to help foster respect and encourage reconciliation. We remain committed to expanding programs that promote reconciliation between religious groups and actively partner with other governments and with civil society actors around the world to forge new bonds among people of all religions and beliefs. In addition, we acknowledge that faith is a powerful and mobilizing force, and faith leaders play a critical role in alleviating the most pressing global challenges. We believe that interfaith efforts can be among the best protections against intolerance and hatred.

In promoting diversity and dialogue, we are guided by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights which clearly states, &Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.8 To that end, we believe that restricting peaceful expression of opinion or belief does not build respect or tolerance. Even with the best intentions, restrictions on speech can not be evenly implemented without some groups feeling discriminated against. The United States believes unequivocally that the freedoms of religion and expression are precisely the antidote that is needed to combat intolerance.

For these reasons the resolution before us must not in any way be read to restrict peaceful expression of opinion or belief. The United States firmly believes in the right of all people to think and express themselves freely and peacefully.

UN resolutions must not be misused to justify imprisonment, torture, and even death sentences for those that express views that are dissident or critical of the government in power. We ask all members of this body to hold accountable those governments that seek to stain the United Nations by associating it with their own acts of intolerance and brutality. Members of society must be able to engage in the open exchange of views without fear of recrimination if we are to develop the understanding and trust necessary to get

along and live peaceably with one other.  
Thank you.  
CLINTON